

***In the Claims:***

Please cancel claims 1-16 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add the following new claims 17-35:

1 ~~17.~~ A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a  
2 network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:  
3 (1) receiving a create message from one of the plurality of host computers, wherein  
4 said create message specifies a message group to be created;  
5 (2) receiving join messages from a first subset of the plurality of host computers,  
6 wherein each of said join messages specifies said message group;  
7 (3) receiving host messages from a second subset of said first subset of the  
8 plurality of host computers belonging to said message group, wherein each of said messages  
9 contains a payload portion and a portion that is used to identify said message group;  
10 (4) aggregating said payload portions of said host messages received from said  
11 second subset of the plurality of host computers to create an aggregated payload;  
12 (5) forming an aggregated message using said aggregated payload; and  
13 (6) transmitting said aggregated message to said first subset of the plurality of host  
14 computers belonging to said message group;  
15 <sup>wherein</sup> ~~whereby~~ said aggregated message keeps the shared, interactive application operating  
16 consistently on each of said first subset of the plurality of host computers.

1 ~~18.~~ The method of claim ~~17~~, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.

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19.

A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:

(1) receiving a create message from one of the plurality of host computers, wherein said create message specifies a message group to be created;

(2) receiving join messages from a first subset of the plurality of host computers, wherein each of said join messages specifies said message group;

(3) receiving host messages from a second subset of said first subset of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group, wherein each of said messages contains a payload portion and a portion that is used to identify said message group;

(4) aggregating said payload portions of said host messages received from said second subset of the plurality of host computers to create an aggregated message;

(5) transmitting said aggregated message to said first subset of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group;

*wherein*  
~~whereby~~ said aggregated message keeps the shared, interactive application operating consistently on each of said first subset of the plurality of host computers.

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The method of claim 19, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.

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A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:

(1) receiving a host message from one of the plurality of host computers belonging to a message group, wherein said host message contains a payload portion and a portion that is used to identify said message group;

(2) forming a server message using said payload portion of said host message;

(3) transmitting said server message to each of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group; and

(4) suppressing said server message such that said one of the plurality of host computers which originated said host message does not receive said server message;

*wherein*  
~~whereby~~ said server message keeps the shared, interactive application operating consistently on each of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group.

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1 <sup>6</sup>  
~~22.~~ The method of claim <sup>5</sup>~~21~~, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.

1 <sup>7</sup>  
~~23.~~ A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a  
2 network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:

3 (1) receiving messages from a subset of the plurality of host computers belonging  
4 to a message group, wherein each of said messages contains a payload portion and a portion  
5 that is used to identify said message group;

6 (2) aggregating said payload portions of said messages to create an aggregated  
7 payload; and

8 (3) transmitting said aggregated message to each of the plurality of host computers  
9 belonging to said message group;

10 <sup>wherein</sup>  
~~whereby~~ said aggregated message keeps the shared, interactive application operating  
11 consistently on each of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group.

1 <sup>8</sup>  
~~24.~~ The method of claim <sup>7</sup>~~23~~, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.

1 <sup>9</sup>  
~~25.~~ The method of claim <sup>7</sup>~~23~~, wherein step (3) is performed after pausing for a pre-  
2 determined time interval.

1 <sup>10</sup>  
~~26.~~ The method of claim <sup>9</sup>~~25~~, wherein said pre-determined time interval is equivalent to the  
2 amount of time for the group messaging server to receive at least one message from each of  
3 the plurality host computers belonging to said first message group.

1 <sup>11</sup>  
~~27.~~ The method of claim <sup>9</sup>~~25~~, wherein said pre-determined time interval is a function of the  
2 rate that said messages are received from said subset of the plurality of host computers  
3 belonging to said first message group.

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1 ~~28.~~ A method for providing group messages to a plurality of host computers connected to  
2 a group messaging server over a unicast wide area communication network, comprising the  
3 steps of:

4 (1) communicating with the plurality of host computers using the unicast network  
5 and maintaining a list of message groups, each message group containing at least one host  
6 computer;

7 (2) receiving messages from a subset of the plurality of host computers, each host  
8 computer in said subset belonging to a first message group, wherein each of said messages  
9 contains a payload portion and a portion that is used to identify said first message group;

10 (3) aggregating said payload portions of said messages received from said subset  
11 of the plurality of host computers to create an aggregated payload;

12 (4) forming an aggregated message using said aggregated payload; and

13 (5) transmitting said aggregated message to a recipient host computer belonging to  
14 said first message group.

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1 ~~29.~~ The method of claim ~~28~~, wherein the unicast wide area communication network is at  
2 least a portion of the Internet.

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1 ~~30.~~ The method of claim ~~28~~, wherein the unicast wide area communication network is at  
2 least a portion of the Internet, and said group messaging server communicates with said  
3 plurality of host computers using a session layer protocol.

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1 ~~31.~~ The method of claim ~~28~~, wherein step (3) is performed after pausing for a pre-  
2 determined time interval.

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1 ~~32.~~ The method of claim ~~31~~, wherein said pre-determined time interval is equivalent to the  
2 amount of time for the group messaging server to receive at least one message from each of  
3 the plurality host computers belonging to said first message group.

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1 <sup>17</sup>  
~~33~~. The method of claim <sup>15</sup>~~31~~, wherein said pre-determined time interval is a function of the  
2 rate that said messages are received from said subset of the plurality of host computers  
3 belonging to said first message group.

1 <sup>18</sup>  
~~34~~. A method for facilitating communications among a plurality of host computers over a  
2 network to implement a shared, interactive application, comprising the steps of:

3 *Added*  
4 (1) receiving a host message from one of the plurality of host computers belonging  
5 to a message group, wherein said host message contains a payload portion and a portion that  
6 is used to identify said message group;

7 *b I 75 b1*  
8 (2) forming a server message <sup>by</sup> using said payload portion of said host message; and <sup>~</sup>

9 (3) transmitting said server message to each of the plurality of host computers <sup>~</sup> *b1*  
10 belonging to said message group;

11 whereby said server message keeps the shared, interactive application operating  
12 consistently on each of the plurality of host computers belonging to said message group.

1 <sup>19</sup>  
~~35~~. The method of claim <sup>18</sup>~~34~~, wherein the network is at least a portion of the Internet.--

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